

7.0 STUDY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the Partners' goals for the study were accomplished through the development of the Transportation Plan. For example, a better understanding was achieved of local transportation issues by meeting with numerous local business groups and the general public. In addition, individual relationships among the partners were enhanced through the discussion of local and regional transportation issues, and the development of criteria or guidelines to resolve contentious issues. However, the Plan must also provide direction to the partners in resolving nuts and bolts transportation issues that affect the operations of the system on a daily basis. In response to this, we make the following findings and recommendations:

7.1 FINDINGS

1. The study area historically has grown at a rate of 1 percent per year for the last 30 years. This population growth rate is expected to continue in the future.
2. By 2025, the population in the study area is expected to show an increase in the number of individuals over the age of 65. As the population ages, there will be implications to the transportation system. Elderly individuals are more likely to be involved in crashes and they are more likely to die in those crashes. In addition, elderly populations may require other forms of transportation such as transit.
3. Economic growth in the study area was significant in the late 1990s through 2002. The growth in the study area helped to diversify the economy of the study area (i.e., increase in professional jobs and service sector jobs).
4. Traffic volume growth on most roadways has been moderate since the completion of the original MATAPS plan. Most roadways currently have little or no congestion (based on daily traffic volumes and the roadway's capacity – this does not mean that there is not some congestion during peak periods or during events such as concerts, holiday shopping, etc.).
5. Future traffic volumes are anticipated to increase between now and 2025. The increase in volumes on some roadways will lead to congested or near congested conditions.
6. Growth and development in eastern Mankato will put pressure on the ability of TH 22 (future Level of Service F in 2025) to serve north-south movements in the area.
7. As more growth occurs in the eastern portion of the City of Mankato, additional parallel north-south routes (i.e., Victory Drive, BEC CSAH 12) will be needed to serve traffic demands.

8. The TH 169 Corridor Management Plan recommended transitioning TH 169 to a freeway facility through Mankato. This means that the traffic signals at Lind Street and Webster Avenue will need to be replaced with an interchange. It also means that an interchange will be needed in the Le Hillier area. Concepts for these areas are shown in Appendix E.
9. Long-term access on TH 14 between Mankato and Eagle Lake will need to be investigated in greater detail by Mn/DOT, Blue Earth County, and the Cities of Eagle Lake and Mankato.
10. High-crash intersections are generally in areas with high traffic volumes. Many of the crashes at these locations are rear-end collisions.
11. High-crash segments are generally in areas with higher traffic volumes and a lot of access. In some areas, access consolidation may be a method to help reduce the number of crashes.
12. Many forms of transportation are needed in order to meet the needs of the population (i.e., transit for elderly and other transit-dependent populations, as well as transit choice users; bicycle facilities for those that prefer to commute to work and to travel by bicycle; trail facilities for the recreational bicyclist, walker and in-line skater, etc.).

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The planning partners should continue the dialogue and open communication that has occurred throughout the MATAPS planning process by meeting with the planning partners on an annual basis to monitor progress on implantation of the plan, to review regional transportation issues in the study area, and to discuss coordination and partnering opportunities.
2. Each of the planning partners should continue to internally review and address the safety, maintenance and operation issues on their system as identified through the MATAPS process (i.e., additional studies, enforcement programs, education programs, maintenance/signage changes, capital improvements, etc.).
3. The planning partners should pursue identified changes to the functional classification system as development occurs and as federal classification thresholds allow.
4. The planning partners should continue to pursue jurisdictional changes as identified and prioritized.
5. It is recommended that the partners incorporate Mn/DOT's access planning guidelines, as contained in the plan, for collector, arterial and IRC roadways into their subdivision ordinances and administrative procedures.

6. The partners should implement strategies to protect important future transportation corridors through land use and zoning ordinances, access management strategies and the official mapping process (e.g., South Route, Victory Drive, Stadium Road, TH 14 and frontage road systems).
7. Interim improvements (median treatments, signing, fencing, etc.) to Stadium Road should be implemented as soon as possible to address pedestrian safety concerns (see Appendix E). Long-term improvements such as an elevated pedestrian crossing or a rerouting of campus traffic should be investigated and pursued by Blue Earth County, the City of Mankato and Minnesota State University.
8. Blue Earth County should pursue a new connection between Stadium Road and Victory Drive. Appendix E shows a preferred concept. Blue Earth County should work with the City of Mankato to preserve the necessary right-of-way.
9. Mn/DOT, Blue Earth County and the Cities of Eagle Lake and Mankato should undertake a long-term access study to identify potential interchange locations on TH 14 between TH 22 and Eagle Lake. Once interchange locations are identified, the study partners should implement land use and zoning tools to preserve the necessary right-of-way.
10. As funding allows, the traffic signals at Lind Street and Webster Avenue should be removed and replaced with an interchange. Appendix E shows the preferred concept.
11. The City of Mankato, Blue Earth County and Mn/DOT should take the steps necessary to implement the recommendations from the Northeast Area Study (see Chapter 6).
12. The MATAPS partners should pursue the development of a bicycle system plan. This plan would include both recreational trails and an on-road bicycle transportation system.
13. The planning partners should coordinate efforts to pursue additional funding through various resources. These resources include state transportation funds, local transportation funds, public/private partnerships, development fees, special assessments and other options.
14. The planning partners should ensure that future land use plans are coordinated with existing and future transportation plans outlined in this study.
15. Planning partners should consider joint representation on planning and zoning commissions for issues related to growth on the fringe of urban areas.
16. The planning partners should periodically review the assumptions under which this plan was developed, including the estimate of future development, population trends, changing financial resources and citizen and local government input.
17. The planning partners should update this plan every five to ten years.